

Written Testimony of Representative Joseph P. Kennedy III (MA-04)
Make It in America: What's Next?
PANEL 3: The Future of Manufacturing

Good afternoon, and thank you all so much for joining us for this important conversation about the future of manufacturing in our country.

To my colleagues Elizabeth, Debbie, John, Cheri and Annie, it is an honor to be a part of this panel with each of you. From New Hampshire and Connecticut to Michigan and Illinois and all the way over to California, I think the makeup of this panel demonstrates how our manufacturing sector is driving economic growth in every single corner of the United States.

And to Congressman Hoyer, you have been a champion for American workers throughout your entire career. Your leadership has helped guide this Caucus and your unwavering commitment to Democratic values only makes us stronger.

With unemployment in our country reaching the lowest levels we've experienced in seven years and the longest streak of private-sector job growth on record, there is no doubt our economy is on a steady path to recovery.

But below the headlines, there is a dangerous undercurrent that cannot be ignored.

Our working and middle-class communities are still struggling to access these recent economic gains. In my district, older industrial cities and towns like Fall River and Taunton are navigating unemployment rates over double the state rate.

These are proud communities that share something in common with hundreds like them across the country – a heritage of work ethic, ingenuity and skill that they have cultivated since the Industrial Revolution, carefully passed from one generation to the next. These are the communities that coined the term 'Made in America'; that made that phrase really mean something.

To leave them behind now wouldn't just turn a cold shoulder to our past – it would undermine our future.

There is no question that new industries are powering today's economy. Where we once had textiles and jewelry and silver, we have health care and clean energy and robotics. But these innovative new sectors still require the most fundamental building block of industry – high quality, innovative, and sustainable goods, made right here on American soil. Whether it's a wind turbine, a prosthetic knee or an air pollution monitor, there is a thriving role for American manufacturing in our increasingly technology-driven world.

The numbers back that up. During that same streak of private-sector job growth I mentioned earlier, we have added nearly a million manufacturing jobs. In Massachusetts, the manufacturing sector employs about a quarter of a million people with wages \$20,000 higher than the state average.

That potential for manufacturing to bridge the gap between communities thriving in our modern economy and those working day and night to catch up is why I was proud to introduce the Revitalize American Manufacturing and Innovation Act last year. This bill would create a network of manufacturing institutes across the country, each dedicated to a modern manufacturing process or challenge.

With institutes up and running in Youngstown, Chicago, Knoxville, Detroit and Raleigh, we know the model is working.

We know that bringing academia, industry and government together under one roof spurs innovation in our manufacturing sector.

And we know that we can and should replicate those institutes in new regions around the country so we can continue to create jobs and train the workers who will fill them.

Through initiatives like Congressman Hoyer's Make it in America and legislation like RAMI, we can transform the abandoned factories and warehouses that dot Main Streets across this country from relics of an industrial past into thriving emblems of an economy that gives every American community a seat at the table.

I'm looking forward to working with my colleagues on this panel and all of Congress to invest in American workers and rebuild the manufacturing sector that has always defined our economy.